United Nations A/52/PV.1

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 16 September 1997, 3 p.m.
New York

Temporary President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Malaysia

The Temporary President: I declare open the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Temporary President: Before calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that as we do so we also observe the International Day of Peace, on this third Tuesday of September, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/67 of 30 November 1981, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Item 122 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/52/350)

The Temporary President: Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/52/350, which has been circulated in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon. It contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that 12 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

97-85978 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The Temporary President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the fifty-second session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Argentina, Barbados, Bhutan, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Zambia.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Election of the President of the General Assembly

The Temporary President: I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President of the General Assembly at the fifty-second session should be elected from among the Eastern European States.

In this connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States that the Group has endorsed the candidacy of His Excellency Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko of Ukraine for the presidency of the General Assembly.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko of Ukraine elected President of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session by acclamation.

I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, and I invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session

The President: It is a great honour and privilege for me to be elected President of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I am very grateful for the support for my candidature by the Member States and, in particular, by members of the regional Group of Eastern European countries. I take it, first and foremost, as a high recognition of the active role which my country, Ukraine, plays in the United Nations and in world affairs.

I wish to extend special thanks to my predecessor, Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia, for his outstanding contribution to strengthening the role of the General Assembly during his presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. I would also like to applaud the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, whose brave efforts aimed at reforming this Organization deserve not only words of praise, but, most importantly, actions and support.

It is symbolic that a representative of a renewed democracy which is living through a period of fundamental social, economic and political reforms, has become President of the General Assembly at a time when the issue of United Nations reform tops its agenda. I believe that the experience both of a long tradition of participation by my country in the activities of the United Nations and of reform currently under way in Ukraine will facilitate this presidency's contribution to the work of the General Assembly. I will rely on the understanding, advice and support of members in my efforts to steer the General Assembly in the direction we are all striving for.

Since proclaiming independence in 1991, Ukraine has succeeded in finding and securing its place on the political map of the world and has already proved to be a visible factor in regional stability and security. By eliminating the world's third biggest nuclear arms stock, and by recently signing a number of basic bilateral treaties with its neighbours and the charter on special partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,

Ukraine has made an essential contribution to strengthening European and world security, thus having a concrete input in implementing the lofty goals enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Ukraine was one of the founding members of the United Nations and has always attached particular importance to the activities of this Organization. Today Ukraine not only joins other States in supporting the course of United Nations reform, but is prepared to spare no effort in building a broad consensus on how best to turn existing proposals into practical deeds. For a number of complex historical reasons, it took decades before my country became a truly independent Member of the United Nations. Now Ukraine looks forward to taking on greater responsibility and to further engaging in the work aimed at comprehensive and effective realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The process of globalization calls for our common action in practically every field of human endeavour. No nation can feel secure when it acts alone to face and respond to new challenges. In fact, the very notion of international security has undergone serious changes since the end of the cold war. Peace and security are now more threatened by internal civil and ethnic strife, international terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear arms and materials than by the possibility of an inter-State war, not to mention a nuclear war. Recent trends in international relations suggest that these threats will not automatically disappear, and they will therefore require priority attention on the part of the United Nations.

Economic and social problems are fraught with the same universal consequences for all countries. That was the major conclusion drawn from several important world conferences during recent years. Many nations have to cope with increasingly persistent poverty, destructive corruption, violation of human rights, organized crime and illicit drug trafficking. Very often the problems associated with underdevelopment translate into an issue of international security.

The current environmental problems also demand our increased attention. The sustainability of the entire ecosystem is put in question by irresponsible exploitation of nature and mismanagement, which pose a serious threat to our common well-being. The sad illustration of this is the Chernobyl catastrophe. It happened on the territory of my country, where, to quote the Revelation of Saint John the Divine,

> "there fell a great star from heaven...upon the third part of the rivers". (*The Holy Bible, Revelation 8:10*)

Although it occurred more than a decade ago, the Chernobyl star of Wormwood still hovers like a Damoclean sword over the world as a bitter reminder for all of us.

Lately the United Nations has come under heavy criticism, and not all of it is unjustified. Yet, despite all its shortcomings, the United Nations remains a unique and indispensable mechanism for addressing new challenges, for the resolution of problems related to the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, human rights, justice and international law, disarmament, prevention of crime and combating international terrorism. By definition, the United Nations possesses unique capabilities for establishing agreed international standards and reaching a global consensus on the most pressing issues which affect the common destiny of all mankind.

I do not want to praise the achievements of the Organization. Neither shall I criticize the United Nations for what it has failed to achieve. Criticism should give way to constructive work aimed at reforming the whole United Nations system. This is a tremendous task, but it has to be accomplished if the purposes of the United Nations have a genuine meaning for all Member States. And there seems to be a broad understanding of the major problems and tasks that loom ahead of us. I am convinced that this understanding should facilitate the establishment of a consensus on how to adapt our Organization to the changing international environment.

I believe the philosophy of this presidency should rest on the solid foundation laid by my predecessors. Its guiding principles should be efficiency, transparency and the democratization of this Organization, including its decision-making process. There are two other essential elements, however, that should be added. These are realism and responsibility.

There is no serious obstacle preventing the United Nations from becoming what it should be and what we, its Member States, would like it to be, so that it does not become a historical monument in the midst of a changed and transformed world. In 1945, we created this Organization to unite nations in their aspiration for peace and security. It is now time to reunite the United Nations as we strive for a better and more promising future.

The programme of reform presented by the Secretary-General stands as a sound basis for further deliberations by the General Assembly. This issue will be at the centre of this session, and I intend to support all efforts aimed at facilitating the process of reform and building a broad consensus that would unite Member States in these efforts. In this respect, I believe that particular attention should be given by the General Assembly to deciding on the most appropriate framework for the consideration of the Secretary-General's reform programme.

Among the issues that have received significant support from the Member States is the strengthening of the role of the General Assembly. The time has come for the potential of the General Assembly to be fully discovered and exploited. This issue was thoroughly examined by the Open-ended High-level Working Group of the General Assembly on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. Implementation of its recommendations should start at this session.

As President of the General Assembly, I intend to explore the possibility of finding proper mechanisms for closer coordination and interoperability between such principal organs as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and, certainly, the Secretary-General.

The previous years have witnessed a substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations and important changes in international relations. That is why we face a need to enlarge the Security Council in order to enhance its representative character and to review its working methods and other matters related to its functioning to reinforce its transparency, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. In my opinion, the principles of the sovereign equality of all Member States and of equitable geographic representation, with due account taken of the interests of all regional groups and of the contribution of Members to the maintenance of international peace and security, should guide our work aimed at the reform of the Security Council.

At the same time, it is necessary to avoid situations in which our work on other issues related to United Nations reform becomes hostage to the divergence of views on Security Council enlargement. As President of this General Assembly, I am determined to do everything possible to streamline a constructive discussion on this issue.

Ensuring the United Nations financial viability is an essential condition for the success of its reform. Despite the outstanding attempts undertaken recently in this regard, the problems facing us in the financial sphere are still unresolved.

In my view, the conditions for finding a way out of the precarious financial situation of the United Nations are now taking shape. At our recommendation, the Secretary-General should improve the Organization's management and structure in the course of the implementation of the proposed programme of reform. In its turn, the reform process would be significantly facilitated if agreement on the next scale of assessments could be reached during the course of this year. We must demonstrate political will and a cooperative approach.

We all know what a tremendously difficult job it is to try to repair a vehicle in motion. However, this session cannot afford to suspend the fulfilment of its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. During the next 12 months, we have to cope with a vast agenda covering a broad range of political, economic, social, disarmament and humanitarian issues, as well as legal, administrative and budgetary ones. We should proceed from the realistic assumption that the strengthening of the United Nations machinery, if successful, will both help us in these endeavours and enhance the willingness of the international community to increase its demand for United Nations services. Hence, focusing on practical issues, the General Assembly should bear in mind the necessity to further re-appraise today's realities in order to define adequate strategies, concepts and procedures in every field of United Nations activities.

Preventive diplomacy has been identified as a priority in the maintenance of international peace and security. Can we assert that the United Nations adequately employs all its instruments and that the allocated resources are sufficient for preventive actions to be successful? If international crime and illegal drug trafficking pose an ever-growing threat to national economies and democratic institutions, which exact part of the responsibility should be assigned to the United Nations so that its contribution to combating these and other evils can bring about desirable results? How should the United Nations address the daunting problems related to the growing numbers of refugees and displaced persons who fall victim to violence?

The acute problems of the least developed countries still remain on the United Nations agenda. What further steps should be taken to prove our intention to resolve them? Are we able and willing to do this? What are the

best possible mechanisms for the United Nations to work in concert with non-governmental organizations in bringing our activities closer to civil society?

This list of questions is not even close to exhaustive. However, addressing all of them and getting the expected answers, no matter how complex they may appear, would to a large extent determine the effectiveness of United Nations reform, if we are guided by realism and responsibility in its implementation.

I am convinced that all of us have our own views on these issues. Let us share them and try to find a common denominator. I should like to use this occasion to remind all the Member States that the success of reform now depends on their political wisdom and their will to act promptly, constructively and decisively.

This session of the General Assembly has all the prerequisites to become a watershed session. During the upcoming months, we have a chance to revitalize this universal Organization and make it more fit to meet the mounting challenges.

I strongly believe that we have enough power to make this session a turning point marking the beginning of a new era in the history of this Organization. The famous French moralist La Rochefoucauld was right in saying that sometimes we have more power than will and that very often we consider things impossible in order to excuse ourselves for not acting in accordance with our abilities.

As President of the General Assembly, I shall encourage action-oriented discussion on the measures and proposals that encompass the reform of the United Nations system. As a diplomat — and a colleague — who has devoted a large part of his professional career to working with the United Nations, I should like to be a witness to a visible landmark in the history of this Organization.

Many years ago, speaking figuratively about the hard work of those who choose the road of change, the outstanding Ukrainian poet Ivan Franko said:

(spoke in Ukrainian)

> "Break down this rock! Let neither weariness, nor weather, nor thirst, nor hunger hold you back from this endeavour."

(spoke in English)

I therefore invite all of us to do hard and dedicated work. We will succeed if we join together.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.2

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 16 September 1997, 5.10 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Election of the officers of the Main Committees

The President: I should like to inform members that the following representatives have been elected Chairmen of the six Main Committees of the Assembly and are accordingly members of the General Committee for the fifty-second session:

First Committee:	Mr. Mothusi Nkgowe (Botswana)
Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee):	Mr. Machivenyika Tobias Mapuranga (Zimbabwe)
Second Committee:	Mr. Oscar de Rojas (Venezuela)
Third Committee:	Mr. Alessandro Busacca (Italy)
Fifth Committee:	Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury (Bangladesh)
Sixth Committee:	Mr. Peter Tomka (Slovakia)

I congratulate the Chairmen on their election.

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

The President: Pursuant to rule 31 of the rules of procedure we shall now proceed to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

All members of the General Assembly are eligible in this election except those already represented in the General Committee, namely, those countries whose representatives have been elected to the presidency of the General Assembly or to the chairmanships of the Main Committees.

In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session shall be elected according to the following pattern:

(a) Six representatives from African States;

(b) Five representatives from Asian States;

(c) Three representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States;

(d) Two representatives from Western European and other States;

97-85990 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

(e) Representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled. We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read out the names of the endorsed candidates:

African States: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Togo, Zimbabwe.

Asian States: Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Qatar, Viet Nam.

Latin American and Caribbean States: Mexico, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Western European and other States: Greece, Ireland.

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have therefore been elected to Vice-Presidencies of the General Assembly: China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States which have been elected Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

The General Committee for the fifty-second session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The first meeting of the General Committee will be held tomorrow, Wednesday, 17 September 1997, at 10 a.m., in Conference Room 4.

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/52/340)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/52/340, which contains a letter dated 12 September 1997 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the Assembly.

As members are aware, the Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its resolution 40/243, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in the letter I have just mentioned, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, which has been meeting from 15 September of this year, to meet until 19 September 1997.

Bearing in mind that this period overlaps with the fifty-second session of the Assembly, may I take it that the General Assembly adopts the recommendation of the Committee on Conferences?

It was so decided.

The President: We have thus concluded consideration of all the items for today's General Assembly meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.3

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 17 September 1997, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Item 6 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

The President: I should like to draw the attention of delegations to a matter concerning the membership of the General Committee for the fifty-second session of the General Assembly that has resulted after the election of Vice-Presidents of the fifty-second session.

At the 1st meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), which took place yesterday afternoon, His Excellency Mr. Machivenyika Tobias Mapuranga of Zimbabwe was elected by acclamation as Chairman of that Committee. At the 2nd plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held subsequently, Zimbabwe was elected as a Vice-President of the Assembly.

Rule 38 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly stipulates that

> "No two members of the General Committee shall be members of the same delegation, and it shall be so constituted as to ensure its representative character".

The General Committee for the fifty-second session of the General Assembly was therefore not properly constituted in view of the fact that, contrary to the provisions of rule 38 of the rules of procedure, two members of the General Committee, namely the Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and one Vice-President of the Assembly, are members of the same delegation, that of Zimbabwe.

Consequently, the General Assembly will have to proceed to the election of one Vice-President of the Assembly from the group of African States.

I have been informed that the group of African States has endorsed the candidature of South Africa as Vice-President of the General Assembly.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, the election of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled. We will therefore proceed accordingly.

I therefore declare South Africa elected a Vice-President of the General Assembly.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the State which has been elected a Vice-President of the General Assembly.

The following States have thus been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly: China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama, Qatar, the Russian

97-85996 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam.

The General Committee for the fifty-second session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.4

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Friday, 19 September 1997, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: first report of the General Committee (A/52/250)

The President: This morning, the Assembly will consider the first report of the General Committee, which has been circulated in document A/52/250. I will refer to specific sections and paragraphs of the report which contain recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

In paragraph 2 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the provisions reproduced in annexes V, VI, VII and VIII to its rules of procedure.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of those provisions? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 3, the General Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 48/264 of 29 July 1994, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", and of annex I thereto, entitled "Guidelines on the rationalization of the agenda of the General Assembly". The General Committee also took note of annex I to General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, entitled "Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields". The provisions of the resolutions are reflected in the document before the General Assembly under the relevant headings.

We shall now examine section II of the report, which deals with the organization of the session.

We turn first to section II.B, which deals with the rationalization of work of the General Assembly. In paragraph 6, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 45/45, regarding certain Main Committees meeting in sequential order, and to paragraph 23 of annex I of resolution 50/227, concerning the discussions in the Second and Third Committees, which, to the extent feasible, should not commence until after the end of the general debate in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 6? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 7, the General Committee took note of the fact that measures introduced to reduce costs relating to overtime would be strictly enforced.

In section II.C, which relates to the closing date of the fifty-second session, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the fifty-

97-86008 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

second session recess not later than Tuesday, 16 December this year.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 9, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the closing date of the fifty-second session will be subject to the implementation of resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997 on the strengthening of the United Nations system.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 9?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 10, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that all the Main Committees should make every effort to complete their work by Friday, 28 November 1997.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to section II.D, concerning the schedule of meetings. With regard to paragraph 11, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that morning meetings should start at 10 a.m. promptly for all plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: I should also like to remind members that, for afternoon meetings, I intend to begin promptly at 3 p.m.

In the same paragraph, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that, as a cost-saving measure, plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees, including informal consultations, be adjourned by 6 p.m. and that no meetings be held on weekends. The Committee further recommends to the General Assembly that this cost-saving measure should also apply, for the remainder of 1997, to meetings on the calendar of conferences and meetings.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 12, the General Committee recommends that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings, the General Assembly should waive the requirement of the presence of at least one third of the members to declare a plenary meeting open and permit the debate to proceed, and of at least one quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: For that matter, I should like to endorse strongly the practical suggestions that were made at previous sessions, for each delegation to designate someone to be present at the scheduled time. I genuinely hope that all delegations will cooperate.

In paragraph 13, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that delegations should be reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort to cooperate in this regard so that all meetings can start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

In section II.E, concerning the general debate, the General Committee recommends that the general debate begin on Monday, 22 September, and end by Friday, 10 October 1997. The General Committee also recommends that the list of speakers in the general debate be closed on Wednesday, 24 September, at 6 p.m.

May I consider that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraph 14?

It was so decided.

The President: In view of the very large number of speakers already inscribed, I urge representatives to speak in the general debate in the order in which they appear on the list of speakers. Those who are unable to speak at the scheduled time will be put at the end of the list for that meeting.

In paragraph 15, the General Committee draws the General Assembly's attention to a previous decision of the Assembly to prohibit the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered. The Committee recommends that this provision should also apply during the fifty-second session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee also recommends to the General Assembly that, after delivering their statements, speakers in the general debate should leave the General Assembly Hall through room GA-200, which is located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to section II.F.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions concerning explanation of vote and right of reply contained in paragraph 16?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to limit points of order to five minutes, as recommended in paragraph 17?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions regarding the length of statements contained in paragraph 18?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.G deals with records of meetings.

In paragraph 19, the General Committee took note of the fact that verbatim records would be provided during the fifty-second session for the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and meetings of the First Committee, and that summary records would be provided for the meetings of the General Committee and the other Main Committees of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 19 concerning transcriptions of the debates of some of the meetings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation also contained in paragraph 19 that the practice not to reproduce *in extenso* statements made in a Main Committee be maintained for the fifty-second session?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.H concerns concluding statements in the General Assembly and the Main Committees.

I take it that the General Assembly takes note of this section?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.I concerns resolutions.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 21 to 25?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.J concerns documentation.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provision relating to reports of the Secretary-General or subsidiary organs contained in paragraph 26?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 27, the General Committee also draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/264 and to paragraph 4 of its resolution 50/206 C, which emphasize that documentation should be available in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents simultaneously in each of the six official languages of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 27?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 28, the General Committee took note of the fact that, as announced earlier, a target has been set for an early reduction in the documentation produced by the Secretariat and that the volume of pre-session documentation for the fifty-second session is projected at a level slightly below that of previous comparable years.

In this connection, I urge members of the Assembly to make a special effort during this session, taking into consideration especially the provisions of resolution 51/241 on the strengthening of the United Nations system, to exercise restraint in making proposals requesting new reports of the Secretary-General and to consider integrating, biennializing or triennializing the presentation of reports.

Section II.K refers to questions relating to the programme budget. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 29 and 30?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 31, which concerns sub-paragraph 13 (d) of decision 34/401, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to the observations by the Secretary-General that the preparation of a statement of programme budget implications by the Secretary-General may take a few days. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the draft resolution can be acted on by the Assembly.

The Secretary-General thus considers it desirable that Member States submit proposals sufficiently in advance to avoid the cancellation of meetings and the postponement of consideration of items.

May I take it that the Assembly takes notes of the observations of the Secretary-General set out in paragraph 31?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.L concerns observances and commemorative meetings. We turn first to paragraph 32. The General Committee recommends that, allowing for the necessary flexibility and with the exception of the anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly should adopt the suggested format for commemorative meetings, including limiting each statement to 15 minutes.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraph 32?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly also approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 33 regarding the scheduling of observances and commemorative meetings?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the General Assembly to turn to section II.M, which refers to special conferences. May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations referred to in paragraphs 34 and 35?

It was so decided.

The President: In section II.N, concerning meetings of subsidiary organs, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, that the subsidiary organs referred to in paragraph 36 be authorized to meet during the main part of the fifty-second session.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section III, which contains observations on the organization of future sessions of the General Assembly. In paragraph 38, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to resolution 51/241, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", adopted by the General Assembly on 31 July 1997 and to be implemented as of 1 January 1998. The attention of the General Assembly is drawn especially to section VI of the annex to the resolution, concerning the timing of the plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 38?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, relating to the adoption of the agenda. This section starts with paragraph 39.

I would first recall rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which provides that:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion."

I should like to stress that at this time we are not discussing the substance of any item.

With regard to paragraph 40, may I consider that it is the wish of the Assembly to direct its Main Committees to review their agendas with a view to streamlining their programmes of work, as suggested in that paragraph?

It was so decided.

The President: Again, may I urge members of the Assembly to give careful thought to the suggestion by the Secretary-General, taking into account especially paragraph 24 of the annex to resolution 51/241, to consider deferring to a later session items for which decisions and action are not required at the present session.

In paragraph 41, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 94 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", should be deferred to the fifty-third session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 42, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 95 of the draft agenda, "Question of East Timor", should be deferred to the fifty-third session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 43, in connection with item 157, "Draft guiding principles for international negotiations", the General Committee recommends its inclusion as a sub-item of item 148 of the draft agenda, "United Nations Decade of International Law".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 44, in connection with item 158, "Amendment to article 13 of the statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 45, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 159, "Need to review General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971 owing to the fundamental change in the international situation and to the coexistence of two Governments across the Taiwan Strait".

In respect of paragraph 46, in connection with item 160 "Towards a culture of peace", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 47, in connection with item 162, "Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the agenda which the General Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly.

In accordance with past practice, we shall follow the numbering given in paragraph 48 of the General Committee's report (A/52/250), and, where it seems appropriate, we shall consider items in groups. I should like to remind members once again that at present we are not discussing the substance of any item, except when such discussion can assist the Assembly in deciding whether or not to include an item in the agenda.

Items 1 to 6 have already been dealt with.

We now turn to items 7 to 47. May I remind members that we are dealing only with the question of the inclusion of the items.

May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that items 48 to 61 are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite members to turn to items 62 to 83 relating to disarmament. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to items 84 to 94. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to items 95 to 101 relating to international economic issues. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Items 102 to 112 relate to social and humanitarian questions. Are these items also to be included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, may I take it that items 113 to 143 dealing with administrative and financial questions are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to items 144 to 152. If there is no objection, I shall take it that these items are included in the agenda.

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to items 153 and 154. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to item 155, entitled "Amendment to article 13 of the statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal". May I take it that this item is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to item 156, entitled "Towards a culture of peace". May I take it that the Assembly recommends the inclusion of this item?

It was so decided.

The President: The next item, item 157, is entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals". May I take it that the General Assembly recommends the inclusion of this item?

It was so decided.

The President: The last item for inclusion is item 158, entitled "Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly". May I take it that the General Assembly recommends the inclusion of this item?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section V of the report of the General Committee on allocation of items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 49?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraph 50. We shall take up the recommendations one by one.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers refer to the agenda in paragraph 48 of the report before us, namely, document A/52/250.

We turn first to the recommendation in paragraph 50 (a)(i), which concerns item 10. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 50 (a) (ii) relating to item 18. May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 50 (a) (iii) concerning item 48. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In connection with paragraph 50 (a) (iv), relating to item 61, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly allocate the item at an appropriate time during the session. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 50 (a) (v) relating to item 156, entitled "Towards a culture of peace". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to paragraph 50 (a)(vi) relating to item 158, entitled "Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 50 (b), relating to item 71, entitled "General and complete disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation pertaining to item 71?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 50 (c) relating to item 105, entitled "Advancement of Women". May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 50 (d) relating to item 118, entitled "Joint Inspection Unit".

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee, on the understanding that the reports of the Joint Inspection

Unit dealing with subject-matters assigned to other Main Committees would be referred also to those Committees?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation contained in paragraph 50 (e) (i) relating to item 146 (c), entitled "Draft guiding principles for international negotiations". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Sixth Committee as a sub-item of item 146?

It was so decided.

The President: We next turn to paragraph 50 (e)(ii) relating to item 155, entitled, "Amendment to article 13 of the statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal". May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to allocate the item to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): It is our understanding that, in allocating item 62 to the plenary, we are in no way prejudging the mechanism to be set up subsequently for the proper and detailed consideration of the issue. This can be either the plenary itself, a committee of the whole, a working group or the relevant Main Committees. It is also our understanding that the plenary itself will decide on the issue of the mechanism after the general debate.

The President: I would like to take this opportunity to inform the General Assembly that the President is now undertaking very extensive consultations, since this issue was raised in the meeting of the General Committee, to determine the mechanism of the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on reform of the United Nations. Certainly, the Assembly in plenary meeting will make a decision on the format of the mechanism on this issue.

I now invite members to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration in plenary meeting.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Rosenstock (United States of America): We wish to associate ourselves with your comments, Mr. President, concerning the treatment of item 62, which has, of course, been referred to plenary meeting for future consideration. That was a decision taken by the General Assembly at this session.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. Legal (France) (*interpretation from French*): My comments are not related to the issue raised by the two previous speakers, but to the fact that, with regard to paragraph 51 of the version of the text from which I am working, the text distributed to us is incomplete. It contains the allocation of items for plenary meetings, First Committee and Fourth Committee, but it does not contain the text of the allocation of items to the Second, Third, Fifth or Sixth Committees.

In principle, in such a case as this my delegation would not be in a position to associate itself with the adoption of the recommendations proposed to us in the report of the General Committee. We are therefore in a difficult position. However, the Secretariat has apologized to us and has indicated that the corrected version of the text — at least, the French version — will be given to us without delay.

Having expressed my reservations, and given the assurances provided to us, I do not want to create problems for the adoption of the recommendations in paragraph 51 in this exceptional case. I understand that the staff of the Secretariat make a great effort, working carefully and to the best of their abilities to provide us with good documentation, so I do not want to complicate their lives. However, I believe that this incident is revealing of the fact that the staff of the General Assembly and of the documentation and language services are working under excessive pressure. This type of incident shows that there are limits to the pressure that one can impose on staff. I believe that our friends in the Secretariat are working hard; perhaps they are working too hard, and this is the result of such overwork.

I do not want to aggravate matters for them — if I may be permitted to use that expression — so I will let

this pass. But I trust that the definitive corrected version will be given to us as soon as possible. We have been given the text in English, but of course the English text cannot suffice.

The President: I should like to assure the representative of France that the Secretariat and the presidency will undertake all necessary measures to have all documents issued in all the official languages of the Organization promptly and on time. As the Assembly is well aware, this bulky document was approved only yesterday by the General Committee, and I convened the plenary meeting at 11 o'clock instead of at 10 o'clock, as originally scheduled, to provide an opportunity for the documentation and other services of the Secretariat to issue all the documents. However, that has not been the case. I can assure delegations that the Secretariat and I will do our best to have documents issued on time. I am grateful to the distinguished representative of France for his cooperation and understanding of the situation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Swaziland.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I wish to echo the spirit of understanding that you, Mr. President, expressed towards the delegation of France, which has received by mistake a document that is not in its language, one of the official languages of the United Nations. I am sure that in the near future the United Nations will have to reconsider the question of languages very carefully, especially given the fact that now there are so many Members of this body whose languages are not regarded as languages because they are not among the six that are used. I, for instance, would like to speak my language, siSwati, here, in order to express myself better in debates. However, we appreciate the understanding offered to the delegation of France.

In addition, I wish to make the observation that a document of this significance should in future be made ready before we come here to adopt the recommendations in the report. In my view, this would allow delegations to peruse the document, see the mistakes and inadvertent omissions and also, perhaps, see where we could make the necessary changes so that the document could be adopted holistically. But when we receive the document only when we arrive here it gives us very little time to understand fully the proposals that we are to adopt. The mistake observed by France, for instance, could have been observed yesterday instead of today.

The President: Let us now turn to the allocation of agenda items to the Main Committees. We come first to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items proposed for the First Committee in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Third Committee as proposed in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Fifth Committee as proposed in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed to the Sixth Committee in paragraph 51 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee.

I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation. Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work as soon as possible, in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

Before we adjourn, I wish to recall and underline that all meetings must start punctually, at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Kindly note that all Main Committees should complete their work by 28 November, and the plenary should recess by 16 December. I hope the Main Committees will continue with the effort they demonstrated in the fifty-first session in concluding their work on time. I personally intend to ensure that we all keep to our commitment taken today.

This undertaking also applies to the Secretariat, which must ensure that all documentation in all languages is in time for meetings to proceed without any delay.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.